CHAPTER XII1 BONAPARTE THE FIRST CONSUL

Bonaparte's Position — The Absence of Enthusiasm — The Provisional Consulate — Measures of Security — The New Constitution — An Autocratic Executive — The Plebiscite — Bonaparte the First Consul — New Officials — Efforts to Appease the Church — The Feeling in France — Confidence Restored — Financial Stability.

WHEN Bonaparte returned to Paris on the evening of the eighteenth of Brumaire he was the arbiter of French destiny; for the great powers of government, both executive and legislative, were in the hands of himself and his creatures. To the multitude it was not, perhaps, much of a feat to disperse by force a legislature which rested on force, and by means of the army to turn the tables on the very Jacobins who had themselves been ever ready to appeal to the army. Moreover, in their minds another constitution more or less was of small importance: the next one would doubtless be only a rearrangement of the old devices. The

1 The newspapers of the period, les theatres populaires. Lecomte: Napoleon's Correspondence and Napoleon et Pempire raconte*s par Commentaries. Aulard: Lelende- le theatre. Schmidt: Tableaux de main du 18 Brumaire and Registre la Revolution. Mallet du Pan: de deliberations du Consulat pro- La Revolution vue de 1'etranger. visoire. The memoirs of Lafayette, Sloane: The French Revolution and Marmont, Gaudin, Hyde de Neu- Religious Reform, in which volume ville, Tercier, and Pasquier. Mon- of the author will be found refer- tier: Robert Lindet. The letters ences to many of the original of Charles de Constant and of sources for our information con- Mme. Reinhard. The works of cerning the restoration of the Ro- Roederer. Albert: Napoleon et man Catholic Church in France.